191 Gambaga Naba (chief of a vast territory in the British colony
193 of the Gold Coast) was, as we have already seen [not translated], the father of Nyennenga, mother of Ouedraogo, the real founder of the Mossi empire. As is well known, any king tends to imitate an illustrious relative and to follow his lead in all matters which might lend him distinction.

This being the case, here is how Doulgou happened to install a marabout at his side. It is said that in addition to his many ministers the king of Gambaga had an imam whose duty was to settle all complicated matters. He was, at the same time, an intimate counselor of the king. Mogho Naba Doulgou, who ruled over a large territory and who felt that he was just as powerful as his ancestor, the king of Gambaga, decided that he, too, wanted to consult only an imam for certain affairs. The emperor had a friend [205] who was a marabout in the region of Zitenga and whose name was Moustapha. Doulgou summoned him to Ouagadougou and conferred upon him the title of Imam.

It goes without saying that neither the learning of this adept in Islam nor any of his other qualifications were checked and that he was not chosen by other marabouts. Thus, the Imam of the Mogho Naba is principally a court dignitary, just like the Ouidi Naba, for example, and, as such, his appointment involves certain barbaric procedures. This is why, after he has been given his turban and his burnoose (insignia of chiefdom) he is invited to a house called surbinda. In this sacred place he is handed a
[272] gourdful of a loathsome beverage, tibo, a mixture of human and animal blood, which all canton chiefs, all ministers, and all court officials must drink at the time of their appointment to make them incapable of treason or lese majesty. The imam takes up the gourd and utters the following sacramental words: "I shall never, under any circumstances, betray the Mogho Naba; I shall come to his aid in time of war; I shall execute without question all orders received from my King," etc.... He then pretends to drink some of the beverage and hands it to the Ouidi Naba who puts the liquid back into the copper jar in which it has been kept for nearly a thousand years. Once these formalities have been completed, he is the Imam of the Mogho Naba. As is

provided by the emperor. The meat is distributed among the assembled faithful. The salam took place in the mosque, and on this occasion the emperor became a Moslem whether or not he was actually a believer. He was expected to take his place among the faithful immediately behind the Imam. As soon as the Imam finished reciting verses from the sacred books, he turns toward the faithful, says, "A salama leckum," and then shakes the king's hand. When the prayer is ended, the emperor returns home, and the Imam soon follows to sacrifice the tabaski sheep. The Mogho Naba himself is required to hold the animal's tail.

Ramadan (Mossi nolokré). It is well known that Ramadan or Lent of the Moslems (the nolokré of the Mossi, from noré, "mouth," and lokré, "untie the knot, loosen") involves a series of privations and abstinences [208] during which the defenceless body is subjected to all sorts of indispositions, sometimes giving rise to real illness.

It is also obvious that the emperor is subject to so severe a regime and to so many obligations that it would be impossible for him to fast, as do the marabouts, even if he were a believer. Nevertheless, the emperor has been so thoroughly persuaded of the yelsomdé (bliss) attained by the penitent after the thirty days of suffering and since he is by no means indifferent to anything concerning the splendors of the Beyond, he asks for volunteers among his entourage who will practice abstinence in his place. On the day of the festival, they receive many gifts (robes, cowries, etc.).

What follows is a summary of the manner in which the king of the Mossi celebrated Ramadan a few years ago.

On the day of the festival, the Gare-yarga (Yarga in charge of the saddle) appears early in the morning bearing hydromel in an old gourd which is said to have been used by Naba Rimba. He drinks a little of the liquid to "break the fast" and then offers a gourdful to the Mogho Naba for the same purpose. The remainder is given to the ministers and other court officials.

The emperor offers food to all present (bowls of rice and sagbo). He has had one or two cows and many sheep slaughtered in advance.

Around seven-thirty in the morning the Mogho Naba used to go with his usual entourage to Roundé-yiri (a place of prayers, a kind of outdoor mosque which [209] used to be located northwest

tuber, Coleus coffini, which Europeans call oussounifing or fabirama, and which may replace potatoes in a pinch, are cultivated in the soils most propitious to them.

The precious karite /shea/ tree (Butyrospermum parkii) grows in most fields; its fruit, prized for its cool and slightly sweet flesh, contains a pit which yields karite butter, the fat most widely used in cooking and to make soap. Around the villages, and sometimes even within them, the néré /locust bean/ tree (Parkia africana) produces elongated pods; its bark, mashed in water, yields a paste that is used to harden the floors of the huts. Its flour makes a cooling drink when mixed in water, and it may also be eaten; its seeds /8/ are used to make kalro /kalre in the original/, the soumbara of the Bambara, an ingredient /made from locust beans, néré/ of all carefully prepared sauces. The doubalé and silk-cotton or kapokiero trees spread their shade over the weavers, numerous among the Mossi, and over the talkers who are even more. Bamboo grows well in the damp southern regions, and the palm oil tree is occasionally found. The caoutchouc liana, however, has not yet been introduced.

Small chickens run in all directions through the villages, along with domesticated guinea hens. Everywhere in the bush near the huts, little boys herd goats and sheep; this is the task of youngsters here at the age when their contemporaries among us /in France/ begin to learn the alphabet. The most common sheep and goats are small in size. The sheep have short hair. Sometimes, especially in the larger villages where markets are held, goats and sheep are to be seen with long legs and long, curled horns. They are imported from the northeast and fattened to be sold as butcher's meat. The height of fashion for the wife or a prosperous naba is to be followed by a Touareg /Tuareg/ sheep, well washed and very white. It is fed on millet leftovers and bean mush, and its mistress often presents it with a bit of salt to lick. In short, it is well cared for and agreeably fat; on some important feast day, it will embellish the menu.

The huts are usually guarded by very commonplace dogs, often ill-tempered, but cowardly. A stick is enough to drive them away. They are mostly used in the hunt, the great Mossi pastime during the dry season. Domesticated ducks are sometimes found in nabas' households, as well as pigeons, but these birds are not widespread and not within the reach of everyone. Finally, almost every group of huts has cats which belong to the women and which are difficult

231 also sold to shoemakers, who need it to rub and soften their hides.
237 In former days wax was given rather than sold. Nowadays it is sold because of the need for cash occasioned by the tax. As for honey,
[262] it is eaten pure, or with milk, or mixed with sarabout. It is also
272 made into a drink called bésou, béci, or bici, which is no other than hydromel. The latter is known, incidentally, throughout West Africa.

The Nounouma call it torosana, from sana, "drink" and toro, "honey." The Kassouna call it by the same name.

The women make hydromel as follows. They boil water, pour the honey into it, and stir. Then they add small-millet flour. The mixture is stirred with a piece of wood and then strained to rid the drink of /493/ all impurities. It is poured into a clean canari,
[435] which is carefully covered. At the end of two days, one has a yellowish drink which is worth 400 cowries or 0.40 franc a liter at Ouagadougou. Among the Nounouma, where honey is more abundant than among the Mossi, the liter is worth 0.20 franc (at Leo, for example). Hydromel is stronger and more potent than dolo, and one must be careful not to drink too much.

252 The Mossi also make little cakes with honey and millet flour. They call them baradaré. These cakes are not made by the Gourounsi.

231 This concludes our review of Mossi stockbreeding. Generally speaking, as we have seen, it is quite mediocre with the exception of two specialities, donkeys and horses. As far as donkeys are concerned, although the Mossi are no traders and have only begun to do a little trading since we occupied their territory, they have always liked the animals and used them either for their own transport or to carry grain. They have an average of one donkey per 42 inhabitants, while the Dagari only have one per 1,000, the Nounouma one per 166, the Sissala one per 55, the Kassonboura one per 50. In this respect, the Mossi run second only to the traders, the Yarsé, who have a pressing need for donkeys in connection with their trade and who have one per 23 inhabitants.

As for horse raising, the Mossi have left it to the Foulbé of Mossi territory. The Mossi nevertheless have an average of one horse per 166 inhabitants among the common people, and one per

222 263 These pods, of course, are not eaten. They merely serve to make the tô sauce fresh and sour, as the Blacks like it.

[261] The pods[1] themselves are only eaten in times of famine, because they give colic. In addition, they harm the mouth, tongue, and teeth (gingivitis).

In ordinary times, the natives use them medically as a fever remedy. They boil them with pimento and drink the decoction. This is done by the Mossi as well as by the Gourounsi, Bambara, etc.

Tamarind pods are also made into dry balls which are sold at market. They are crudely mashed with a pestle, and then pressed together in cold water into balls of varying size. Whenever one wishes to give the to a tamarind taste, one pries loose a small piece of the ball with a knife and places it in the canari of boiling water where millet flour will be added.

278 757 Like the Bambara, the Mossi prepare a purging drink with the tamarind pod, either fresh or dried. It is boiled in water, a tiny bit of millet flour is added, and the drink is consumed when slightly warm. This decoction has laxative properties. The Haoussa are also familiar with it, but the Gourounsi are not.

222 137 To summarize, the tamarind pod has two chief uses among the Mossi and other Blacks of West Africa. It serves to sour and freshen the tô, and it also serves as a purgative.

● 222 Let us add that Dr. Rançon, in the account of his /501/ trip through Upper Gambia, described the preparation of a tamarind drink for European consumption. The pod is left to dissolve in cold water for three hours, sugar is added, and a sort of lemonade results.

222 137 The Mossi have rônier in every village. This, as we know, is a variety of palm tree.

"It is the largest palm tree, Borassus flabelliformis," says Dr. Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie, pages 139 to 141). "It is easy to recognize owing to its height and characteristic appearance. Its trunk is very long and may sometimes reach 25 or 30 meters. It is swollen in the middle, and its lower and upper parts are much less thick, much more slender. The bark is blackish and bears scars of the wounds left by fallen leaves. The wood, although it looks spongy, is quite tough and hard to dent with a saw. Rônier logs are heavier than water. This is one of the rare woods that do not float. The leaves of a grown rônier are clustered in a thick bunch at the

[1] [i.e. tamarind pods — Analyst]

273 The Mossi make n'kounangui, like the Bambara, but the Toucouleur and Foulah do not because they are Moslems. The latter's slaves alone, being fetishists make some. The Gourounsi do not make it either, but this is because n'kouna is scarce in Gourounga country. The Gourounsi claim that this tree keeps hyenas away, and when someone dies in the bush and is buried on the spot, a branch of n'kouna is planted where he was buried. It is said that the hyenas will wander about at a distance, but will never dare come close and dig up the body. The Gourounsi claim that this is a matter of common knowledge.

222 137 The léla is another kind of wild plum tree. It is called séno in Bambara and Malinké, filina in Nounouma, mia in Kassouna, mellemoila in Sissala. Its plums are tiny. They are yellow before they ripen, and red when completely ripe (March-May). They are no larger than the tip of the finger, and they are eaten as they are. The almond is not eaten. Children sometimes munch on it, but when eaten in large quantities it causes colic.

The sibi, another tree found in the Mossi bush, is called n'pékou in Bambara and Peuhl, bembé in Sarakolé. The Nounouma called it kakian, the Kassouna kakiéno, the Nankana sibi like the Mossi. The fruit is tiny and sometimes causes colic. It ripens during the dry and warm season, and it is eaten as it comes. The [277] Habé prepare a drink from it which is called diam-n'pékoudian ("n'pékou water") by the local Foulbé and Toucouleur. The Mossi, Gourounsi, and Bambara do not make this drink.

Let us cite also the tiarala (tiaralsé or tiaralésé in the plural, n'ségué in Bambara, saô in Nounouma). The Mossi are very fond of [276] the tiarala fruit, which is highly aromatic and which is used /506/ to lend fragrance to native tobacco. They also eat the leaves.

Let us proceed to kara (or kaka). This is the Mandé n'taba. It is the Mandé n'taba. It is called dankola in Nounouma and Sissala, kalankola in Kassonboura.

"The n'taba," says André Rançon (Dans la Haute-Gambie, page 35), "is a malvoidea /?/ of the Sterculiacea family. It is the Sterculia cordifolia Cav., thus named because its leaves are heart-shaped. It is one of the most beautiful plants of tropical African regions. It is easily recognized by its enormous trunk, huge leaves,

222 and very peculiar fruit. The latter, which grows at the tip of
137 young boughs, is shaped like a huge pod whose pulpy valves open when pressure is exercised along the convex ridge. Its free tip is equipped with a sort of pulpy appendage shaped like a thorn, about 0.06 meter in length. When ripe, the fruit is of a distinctive light-red color. It contains a dozen polyhedral seeds immersed in a yellowish flesh which is tasty and highly fragrant. It is one of the best desserts I came across in the Sudan, and we often feasted on it. The fruits are clustered in bunches of three, five, or seven, and strongly fastened to the peduncle and stem that hold them. They rarely fall, and in order to gather them one must break the bough that bears them."

André Rançon adds (page 36) that the n'taba is related to the kola nut. It is apparently a sort of false kola tree.

The n'taba fruits ripen from December to April. The Mossi and Gourounsi eat them when they have dried out on the tree, or
[65 435] else as they come /fresh/, or after boiling them for a quarter of an hour. They are sold on Mossi markets at the price of three for 1 cowrie, six for 2 cowries, etc., that is to say, 150 for 1 sou.

• 272 These fruits are also used to prepare a drink among the Mossi and Gourounsi. They are boiled, mashed, placed in a canari filter, that is, a canari perforated at the bottom which is placed on top of another canari. Water is poured upon the fruits /507/, becomes permeated with the juice, and passes on to the bottom canari. This drink is sweet and tastes like honey.

222 Let us cite also the kamsoro (n'kodo in Bambara). It is a very
137 big, thickset tree, with characteristic leaves. The latter are very tough, very large, very thick, their shape ovoidal or rather a little more elongated than an egg, and their color a brilliant green.

The fruits of this tree are eaten throughout the year, especially by children, because ripe ones are to be found at all times.

There are no kamsoro in Gourounga territory.

Let us also cite the véda or ouéda, the caoutchouc liana, called n'saba in Mandé, fôgui in Peuhl, fittigné in Sarakolé, which is also called laré and Vahea senegalensis. This liana bears fruits that ripen in March and April. They might best be compared to oranges. They are green before they ripen and orange-yellow when ripe. Rançon claims that they are delicious. These fruits are eaten as they